

In The Claims:

Claims 1-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A functional male element of metal adapted for use with a metal panel element of steel of drawing quality and having a thickness, said male element being formed of a material which in the context of cold deformation achieves the strength values of class 5.6 in accordance with the ISO standard and[[,]] comprising:

a shaft part:

a head part axially aligned with said shaft part and forming a hollow tubular wall adapted for forming a riveting joint with a panel element;

wherein said shaft part defines a shaft diameter and said tubular wall defines an outer wall diameter corresponding to substantially the same as said shaft diameter, said tubular wall being deformable thereby forming a flange with the panel element; and head part merging into said shaft part without a panel element contacting flange;

wherein said head part includes a distal end defining an outer edge being rounded for punching and drawing and an inner edge defining a conical cutting surface remote from said shaft part and diverging in a direction going from said shaft part to a free end of said head part; said head part having a longitudinal dimension and tubular wall thickness, wherein, in use and under the action of pressing forces applied to said shaft part, said distal end of said head part operating in conjunction with a die button supporting said metal panel element pierces a slug from said metal panel element and wherein said tubular wall thickness and said longitudinal dimension are selected so that said longitudinal dimension forms an annular fold defining a panel element contacting flange and having a radially outwardly direction portion and a radially inwardly directed portion contacting said metal panel element, said longitudinal dimension being

of sufficient length to also include a length of the head part in the metal panel element and a length of a rivet flange formed on an opposite side of said metal panel element from said panel element contacting flange.

25. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 24, wherein said distal end defines an outer edge rounded for punching and drawing and an inner edge defining a conical cutting surface.

26. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 24, wherein said head part defines an inner surface of said tubular wall having a substantially tubular shape.

27. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 24, wherein said head part includes a longitudinal dimension for forming an annular fold for securing the functional element to a sheet metal part having a thickness, said annular fold having a radial dimension and said longitudinal dimension amounting at least to a length of a rivet flange formed on a side of the sheet metal part remote from the shaft part plus the thickness of the sheet metal part plus double the radial dimension of said annular fold.

28. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 24, wherein said shaft part is hollow.

29. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 24, wherein said shaft part defines a threaded outer surface.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 24, wherein said functional element is made as a cold formed part.

32. (Previously Presented) A functional element in accordance with claim 31, wherein said thread is formed from one of a thread rolling process and a compression forming process.

Claims 33-55 (Canceled)